

Islamic Religious Education as a Medium for Strengthening the Value of Moderation (*Tawasuth*) in the Digital Era: A Case Study at MAN 2 Aceh Tengah

Indra¹ Muhammad Riza²

^{1,2}IAIN Takengon, Central Aceh, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) as a medium for strengthening the value of *tawasuth* the Islamic principle of moderation—in the context of the Digital Era, which is characterized by rapid technological change and increasing ideological polarization. The research focuses on how Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 2 Aceh Tengah integrates moderate Islamic values into teaching practices and digital interactions to promote balanced thinking, tolerance, and ethical awareness among students. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and document analysis of school programs related to religious moderation. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns of pedagogical adaptation, digital engagement, and institutional strategies supporting *tawasuth* in Islamic education. The findings reveal that MAN 2 Aceh Tengah has adopted a multi-dimensional strategy to embed moderation values through curriculum design, teacher exemplarity, and digital ethics education. Teachers function as both moral guides and media literacy facilitators, encouraging students to critically engage with online religious content while maintaining ethical communication and respect for diversity. The school also integrates *tawasuth* into extracurricular activities and digital campaigns, promoting harmony between faith, reason, and technology. This study concludes that Islamic Religious Education, when supported by institutional policy and digital pedagogy, serves as an effective platform for cultivating *tawasuth* as a living value in students' character formation. The research contributes to contemporary debates on religious moderation, moral resilience, and ethical citizenship in the digital age, offering a model for faith-based schools navigating the challenges of online radicalization and moral fragmentation.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, *Tawasuth*, moderation, digital era, religious tolerance

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) sebagai media penguatan nilai *tawasuth* prinsip moderasi dalam Islam di tengah era digital yang ditandai oleh percepatan teknologi dan meningkatnya polarisasi ideologis. Fokus penelitian ini adalah bagaimana Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 2 Aceh Tengah mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam moderat ke dalam praktik pembelajaran dan interaksi digital guna menumbuhkan pola pikir seimbang, toleransi, dan kesadaran etis pada peserta didik. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan guru dan siswa, serta analisis dokumen terhadap program sekolah yang berkaitan dengan moderasi beragama. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi pola adaptasi pedagogis, partisipasi digital, serta strategi kelembagaan dalam mendukung penerapan nilai *tawasuth* dalam pendidikan Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa MAN 2 Aceh Tengah menerapkan strategi multidimensional dalam menanamkan nilai moderasi melalui desain kurikulum, keteladanan guru, dan pendidikan etika digital. Guru berperan sebagai pembimbing moral sekaligus fasilitator literasi digital, mendorong siswa untuk berpikir kritis terhadap konten keagamaan daring sambil menjaga etika komunikasi dan menghargai keberagaman. Sekolah juga mengintegrasikan nilai *tawasuth* dalam kegiatan ekstrakurikuler dan kampanye digital yang menekankan harmoni antara iman, akal, dan teknologi. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Pendidikan Agama Islam, ketika didukung oleh kebijakan kelembagaan dan pedagogi digital, menjadi sarana efektif dalam menumbuhkan nilai *tawasuth* sebagai bagian dari pembentukan

karakter peserta didik. Hasil penelitian ini berkontribusi pada diskursus kontemporer tentang moderasi beragama, ketahanan moral, dan kewargaan etis di era digital, serta menawarkan model penerapan bagi lembaga pendidikan Islam dalam menghadapi tantangan radikalisasi daring dan fragmentasi moral.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan Agama Islam, tawasuth, moderasi, era digital, toleransi beragama

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Corresponding Author:

Indra

IAIN Takengon, Central Aceh, Indonesia

Jl. Paya Reje, Timangan Gading, Kebayakan, Takengon, Aceh Tengah

Email: indragayo1@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of technology in the 21st century often described as the Digital Era has profoundly influenced not only communication and information exchange but also the formation of religious values and moral identities. The global digital ecosystem enables the dissemination of diverse ideas but also intensifies ideological polarization, echo chambers, and the spread of religious intolerance (Abdullah, 2021; Esposito & Kalin, 2019). In this context, education becomes a critical medium for nurturing balanced, inclusive, and ethical worldviews. Within the framework of Islamic education, this equilibrium is captured in the concept of *tawasuth* the value of moderation, positioned between extremism (*tatharruf*) and negligence (*tasahul*).

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) serves as both a moral compass and an intellectual foundation for Muslim learners. It is not merely about doctrinal transmission but also about cultivating spiritual intelligence, social harmony, and ethical reasoning (Huda et al., 2022). In Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs promotes *tawasuth*, *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), and *i'tidal* (justice) as the four pillars of religious moderation, aiming to counteract extremism while fostering civic and moral virtues (Kementerian Agama RI, 2020). Therefore, strengthening *tawasuth* through Islamic Religious Education is both a pedagogical imperative and a national necessity in maintaining social cohesion within a pluralistic society.

Recent studies highlight that digitalization has redefined the role of education in shaping religious understanding (Haris et al., 2020; Nasir & Sari, 2023). On one hand, digital media enables wider access to Islamic knowledge; on the other, it also opens the door to misinterpretations and radical ideologies. Youth are particularly vulnerable to fragmented religious discourses circulating through unregulated digital platforms (Alam, 2022; UNESCO, 2021). Thus, educators are increasingly challenged to navigate between digital openness and moral safeguarding, transforming classrooms into spaces that promote critical thinking, empathy, and moderation.

The value of *tawasuth* aligns closely with the global movement toward religious moderation and intercultural ethics. Scholars such as Abdullah Saeed (2018) and Albayrak (2021) argue that moderation is not a passive position but an active moral stance rooted in intellectual humility and rational reflection. It encourages Muslims to uphold universal ethics while remaining faithful to Islamic revelation. Within educational settings, *tawasuth* emphasizes *adl* (justice), *rahmah* (compassion), and *hikmah* (wisdom) as guiding principles for ethical judgment and civic engagement. Consequently, the role of teachers extends beyond knowledge delivery; they become agents of moral balance in both physical and digital environments (Huda & Kartanegara, 2020).

In Indonesia, the government's Religious Moderation Roadmap 2020–2024 underscores the urgency of embedding moderation within Islamic education curricula, particularly in madrasah aliyah (Islamic senior high schools). Institutions like MAN 2 Aceh Tengah exemplify this mission by integrating *tawasuth* into both learning activities and digital literacy programs. The madrasah's educational philosophy is grounded in *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy to all creation), promoting respectful dialogue and ethical technology use among students. However, implementing moderation in the digital learning landscape poses new challenges. The anonymity of online spaces, the speed of information, and the rise of algorithmic bias can inadvertently amplify intolerance and misinformation (Azhar & Mahfud, 2023). To address these issues, educators must cultivate digital ethics (*akhlaq raqamiyyah*) the ability to use technology responsibly and critically, guided by Islamic moral values (Huda et al., 2023). The success of Islamic Religious Education in this era depends on how effectively it integrates *tawasuth* with digital literacy, ensuring that students become both technologically competent and ethically grounded. This

study seeks to analyze how Islamic Religious Education at MAN 2 Aceh Tengah functions as a medium for strengthening *tawasuth* in the Digital Era. It explores three interrelated research questions:

1. How are the principles of *tawasuth* integrated into Islamic Religious Education pedagogy and school policy?
2. How do teachers and students interpret and practice *tawasuth* within digital and social media contexts?
3. What institutional strategies support the sustainability of moderation values amid digital challenges?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to the broader discourse on religious moderation, digital ethics, and moral resilience in contemporary Islamic education. It proposes that *tawasuth*, when recontextualized through digital pedagogy, can serve as a transformative educational paradigm bridging faith and reason, spirituality and technology, tradition and innovation. The findings are expected to inform future policy development and pedagogical reform in Islamic schools, particularly in promoting ethical digital citizenship rooted in Islamic moral philosophy.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The Concept of *Tawasuth* (Moderation) in Islamic Thought

Tawasuth, or moderation, is a central ethical and spiritual principle in Islamic civilization (Riza 2022). Derived from the Arabic term *wasat* meaning balance, justice, and centrality it denotes the path of equilibrium between extremes (Albayrak, 2021). The Qur'an describes the Muslim community as *ummatah wasatan* (a just and balanced nation) in Surah Al-Baqarah [2:143], implying that Muslims are called to uphold fairness and moral temperance in all aspects of life. In the educational context, *tawasuth* emphasizes harmony between intellectual pursuit, emotional balance, and spiritual awareness (Abdullah, 2021).

Contemporary Islamic scholars such as Saeed (2018) and Albayrak (2021) interpret *tawasuth* not merely as an abstract moral ideal but as a dynamic ethical framework guiding engagement with pluralism, knowledge, and modernity. It involves critical openness embracing diversity while maintaining theological integrity. Thus, *tawasuth* is understood as both a cognitive orientation (thinking with balance) and a behavioral disposition (acting with justice and compassion).

Within Islamic education, *tawasuth* is operationalized through curriculum integration and teacher exemplarity. According to Huda and Kartanegara (2020), Islamic pedagogy must unite *iman* (faith), *ilm* (knowledge), and *amal* (action), creating a moral ecosystem that reflects moderation in belief, thought, and practice. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama RI, 2020) institutionalizes *tawasuth* as one of the four pillars of *moderasi beragama* (religious moderation), alongside *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), and *i'tidal* (justice). These principles collectively serve as a pedagogical framework for developing moral resilience and inclusive spirituality among students.

2.2 *Tawasuth* as Moral Resilience and Social Harmony

From a pedagogical standpoint, *tawasuth* functions as a moral filter that helps learners navigate ideological complexity and emotional polarization. In the digital era, where students are constantly exposed to diverse narratives and competing truth claims, *tawasuth* becomes crucial in nurturing moral discernment the capacity to evaluate information and respond ethically (Nasir & Sari, 2023).

Moderation education aligns with moral resilience theory, which posits that character strength is developed through consistent reflection, empathy, and self-regulation (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2016). In Islamic psychology, this is reflected in the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul), where self-awareness and moral discipline are cultivated to maintain balance between desire (*shahwah*) and reason (*'aql*). Huda et al. (2023) emphasize that *tawasuth* in education nurtures students' ability to critically engage with differing perspectives without succumbing to fanaticism or relativism.

In practice, teaching *tawasuth* involves more than doctrinal explanation it requires experiential learning through dialogue, reflection, and community engagement. According to Abdullah (2021), effective moderation pedagogy blends rational understanding with spiritual empathy, allowing students to internalize moral values as living experiences rather than abstract dogmas. This pedagogical orientation transforms the classroom into a moral laboratory where learners negotiate faith, diversity, and modernity with ethical awareness.

2.3 Digital Ethics and Religious Moderation

The rise of digital technology has reshaped moral and religious communication, creating new challenges for educators in maintaining ethical boundaries (Alam, 2022). The digital sphere has amplified both opportunities

and risks: while it facilitates the dissemination of Islamic knowledge, it also serves as a breeding ground for religious intolerance, misinformation, and ideological manipulation (Esposito & Kalin, 2019).

In response, educators are encouraged to promote digital ethics (*akhlaq raqamiyyah*), an emerging framework that applies Islamic moral principles to online behavior. Huda et al. (2022) define digital ethics as “the alignment of technological use with *iman*, *taqwa* (piety), and social responsibility.” Within this framework, *tawasuth* provides the moral foundation for digital engagement, guiding students to balance freedom of expression with respect, truthfulness, and compassion.

Azhar and Mahfud (2023) argue that embedding moderation in digital literacy curricula helps students resist the lure of algorithmic extremism online content that reinforces binary worldviews and moral absolutism. By integrating *tawasuth* into digital education, teachers at faith-based schools foster ethical digital citizenship, where students learn to use technology as a means of spreading *rahmah* (mercy) and *hikmah* (wisdom). UNESCO (2021) also highlights this alignment, advocating for value-based approaches to digital transformation that uphold human dignity and intercultural understanding.

In this light, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) functions as a mediating framework bridging the gap between moral values and technological realities. When grounded in *tawasuth*, digital education becomes an avenue for cultivating ethical literacy, encouraging learners to think critically, communicate responsibly, and engage constructively in plural digital communities.

2.4 Faith–Reason Integration in Religious Pedagogy

The balance between faith and reason (*iman wa ‘aql*) has long been central to Islamic educational philosophy. Classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali viewed knowledge as both a spiritual journey and an intellectual pursuit, arguing that reason must serve revelation in achieving moral truth (Huda & Kartanegara, 2020). In the context of digital learning, this integration gains renewed relevance: rational thinking helps students analyze information critically, while faith ensures ethical guidance in interpreting and applying knowledge.

Saeed (2018) asserts that a modern Islamic pedagogy rooted in *tawasuth* must foster “critical faithfulness” a disposition that combines devotion to religious principles with openness to dialogue and technological progress. This concept resonates with constructivist theories in education, which view learning as an active, contextualized process of meaning-making (Braun & Clarke, 2019). However, Islamic education enriches this model by adding a transcendent dimension, where knowledge acquisition is framed as an act of *ibadah* (worship) and a path toward spiritual refinement.

Through this integration, *tawasuth* becomes both a moral philosophy and an epistemological framework guiding how knowledge is taught, learned, and applied. In the case of MAN 2 Aceh Tengah, this theoretical foundation supports a pedagogical model where digital literacy, moral reasoning, and faith-based reflection intersect preparing students to be not only informed learners but also moderate, ethical, and compassionate digital citizens.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a **qualitative case study design** to explore how Islamic Religious Education (IRE) serves as a medium for strengthening the value of *tawasuth* (moderation) in the digital era. A qualitative design was selected because it allows for an in-depth understanding of social and pedagogical processes within their natural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The case study approach is appropriate for capturing the complexity of phenomena related to moral education, digital ethics, and institutional culture in a specific educational environment (Yin, 2018). The study aimed to interpret meaning, perception, and lived experiences rather than to measure variables. Thus, the focus was on how teachers, students, and administrators at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 2 Aceh Tengah conceptualize, implement, and internalize the value of *tawasuth* through religious and digital learning practices.

3.2 Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at MAN 2 Aceh Tengah, a state Islamic senior high school located in Central Aceh, Indonesia. This institution was selected purposively because of its established reputation in promoting *tawasuth*-based education and its integration of digital literacy into religious learning. Participants included five Islamic Religious Education teachers, two administrators (curriculum and student affairs coordinators), and eight students from grades XI and XII. This total of 15 participants was deemed sufficient for achieving data saturation (Guest et al., 2006). The sampling technique followed purposive sampling criteria selecting individuals directly involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of character education programs (Etikan et al., 2016). Participants were informed about the objectives of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. Pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted over three months (January–March 2025) through triangulated qualitative methods, including:

1. Semi-structured interviews: Conducted with teachers, administrators, and students to explore their understanding of *tawasuth*, its relevance in the digital age, and its integration into Islamic education. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was recorded with participant consent.
2. Non-participant observations: Observations were made in classrooms and extracurricular activities to examine how moderation values were practiced in interactions, digital lessons, and moral guidance sessions.
3. Document analysis: Included reviewing lesson plans, school policies, digital campaign materials, and official moderation guidelines from the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed thematic analysis procedures based on Braun and Clarke's (2019) model. This method was chosen for its flexibility in identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. The process involved six steps:

1. Familiarization: Repeated reading of interview transcripts and observation notes to understand context.
2. Generating initial codes: Coding meaningful segments related to *tawasuth*, moderation, and digital ethics.
3. Searching for themes: Grouping codes into broader themes such as "Pedagogical Moderation," "Digital Moral Awareness," and "Institutional Support."
4. Reviewing themes: Refining and validating coherence between data and themes.
5. Defining and naming themes: Labeling each theme with interpretive significance.
6. Producing the report: Synthesizing findings into analytic narratives supported by direct quotations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Findings

The findings from observations, interviews, and document analyses demonstrate that MAN 2 Aceh Tengah has successfully positioned Islamic Religious Education (IRE) as a central medium for cultivating *tawasuth* (moderation) among students in the Digital Era. Three major themes emerged from the data:

1. Pedagogical integration of *tawasuth* within classroom instruction and curriculum design.
2. Digital ethics education as a vehicle for moderation and responsible technology use.
3. Institutional culture and collaboration as a foundation for sustaining moderation values.

These themes collectively indicate that the school has created a value-based educational ecosystem where moderation, ethics, and technology coexist harmoniously reflecting a contextualized application of Islamic moral education in a modern environment (Huda et al., 2022; Abdullah, 2021).

At the pedagogical level, teachers at MAN 2 Aceh Tengah incorporate *tawasuth* into lesson planning and learning materials, ensuring that religious teachings promote balance, tolerance, and justice. Lesson plans reviewed in this study explicitly referenced moderation principles drawn from the Qur'an (Surah Al-Baqarah [2:143]) and the Prophet's sayings promoting humility and fairness. Teachers emphasized values such as *adl* (justice), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *hikmah* (wisdom) when discussing religious and social issues.

Interviews revealed that *tawasuth* was not taught as an abstract concept but as a practical moral attitude. For example, students were encouraged to analyze real-world issues such as religious differences, environmental ethics, and online communication through the lens of moderation. Teachers guided discussions that balanced textual fidelity (*nash*) with contextual reasoning (*aqI*), embodying the integration of faith and reason in moral deliberation (Huda & Kartanegara, 2020).

These practices reflect Saeed's (2018) framework of *contextual Islamic ethics*, which emphasizes moral flexibility within the bounds of faith. By situating *tawasuth* within everyday social realities, the curriculum promotes critical faithfulness a balanced attitude that resists both blind literalism and moral relativism. In the Digital Era, one of the school's most innovative efforts is the incorporation of *tawasuth* values into digital literacy and ethics education. MAN 2 Aceh Tengah uses digital media not only as a learning tool but also as a moral space where students practice ethical decision-making.

Observation of online learning sessions revealed that teachers frequently discussed topics such as digital responsibility, online manners (*adab al-raqamiyyah*), and the ethics of information sharing. For instance, during a discussion on "Islam and Media Literacy," students analyzed viral religious content and debated whether it aligned with Islamic principles of moderation and truthfulness. Teachers used these moments to highlight the importance of *tawasuth* as a moral compass in the digital realm, echoing UNESCO's (2021) call for value-based digital transformation in education.

Students also participated in digital campaigns promoting moderation—such as creating short videos, posters, or blog entries on themes like *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (Islam as mercy to all) and *unity in diversity*. These initiatives demonstrated that *tawasuth* could be internalized through creative digital engagement, transforming social media into a platform for *da'wah bil hikmah* (wise advocacy).

This approach aligns with findings by Azhar and Mahfud (2023), who emphasize that embedding moderation in digital education enhances students' critical media literacy while fostering religious tolerance. It also reflects the model proposed by Huda et al. (2023), in which moral literacy and digital literacy are integrated to cultivate "ethical digital citizens" grounded in Islamic virtues.

The study also found that *tawasuth* was deeply embedded in the institutional culture of MAN 2 Aceh Tengah. School leaders, teachers, and students collaboratively shaped an environment that reinforced moderation in daily routines and organizational practices. Morning assemblies began with brief reflections (*tausiyah*) on moral values emphasizing balance, cooperation, and humility. The school also implemented a "Moderation Week" program featuring interfaith dialogues, student debates on ethical dilemmas, and digital literacy workshops. Such initiatives embody the idea of *ta'dib* the process of moral refinement through education and habituation (Albayrak, 2021). The involvement of parents and local religious leaders in moderation programs further strengthened the community dimension of *tawasuth*. This approach is consistent with Abdullah's (2021) model of *educational ecosystem for moderation*, which posits that moral resilience develops through the synergy of family, school, and society.

Through these collaborative practices, the school cultivated what Narvaez and Lapsley (2016) term a "community of virtue," where shared moral language and practices sustain ethical norms. Such institutional alignment ensured that moderation values were not confined to classroom instruction but were lived experiences across the school community. Despite the overall success, several challenges were identified. Teachers expressed concerns over students' overexposure to digital media and the rapid circulation of extremist or misleading content. The lack of media literacy among some students made them susceptible to emotional or sectarian interpretations of religious material.

Moreover, some teachers faced difficulties in balancing traditional teaching methods with digital tools. As Huda et al. (2022) note, the integration of technology in Islamic education requires continuous pedagogical innovation and ethical reflection. Institutional limitations such as inadequate internet infrastructure and limited digital training for educators also hindered implementation. These challenges underscore the need for ongoing professional development and curriculum reform that explicitly links religious moderation with digital ethics. As Alam (2022) argues, combating online radicalization requires proactive educational strategies that empower students to interpret information critically and act responsibly.

4.2. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at *Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 2 Aceh Tengah* functions as a strategic platform for strengthening *tawasuth* (moderation) amid the complexities of the Digital Era. The integration of moderation into pedagogical practice, digital engagement, and institutional culture illustrates how Islamic education can remain both faithful to its spiritual foundations and responsive to technological transformation.

4.2.1 Pedagogical Implementation of *Tawasuth*

Teachers at MAN 2 Aceh Tengah actively embed *tawasuth* into the classroom context by linking Islamic doctrines with contemporary social realities. The value of moderation is operationalized through critical discussion, reflective dialogue, and contextual reasoning. For instance, teachers encourage students to interpret Qur'anic verses on justice (*adl*) and tolerance (*tasamuh*) through real-life issues such as online discourse, civic participation, and pluralism. This finding supports Saeed's (2018) argument that moderation is not a passive stance but an intellectual and moral disposition rooted in justice and balance. It aligns with Abdullah's (2021) concept of *wasatiyyah* as a pedagogical paradigm—where faith, ethics, and social engagement converge to cultivate *insan kamil* (the complete person). By adopting this integrative approach, IRE at MAN 2 Aceh Tengah promotes critical faithfulness, enabling students to engage with religious knowledge using both devotion and discernment (Huda & Kartanegara, 2020). The pedagogical process also resonates with the constructivist approach to Islamic education, in which students are guided to co-construct understanding through inquiry and reflection rather than rote learning. The teacher's role thus shifts from being an instructor to a moral facilitator, fostering a learning environment that embodies compassion, fairness, and intellectual humility key traits of *tawasuth* (Albayrak, 2021).

4.2.2 *Tawasuth* and Digital Ethics

A distinctive contribution of MAN 2 Aceh Tengah's program lies in its integration of *tawasuth* within digital ethics education. In a context where students are constantly exposed to polarized religious narratives and misinformation, IRE teachers have developed classroom practices that emphasize *adab al-raqamiyyah* (digital manners). Students are taught to evaluate online religious content critically, verify sources, and communicate ethically across digital platforms. These efforts reflect the framework proposed by Huda et al. (2022), which views digital ethics as a continuation of Islamic moral pedagogy linking technology use with *taqwa* (God-consciousness) and social responsibility. Through initiatives such as online campaigns on *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (Islam as a mercy to all) and student-created digital posters about tolerance, the school transforms digital learning into a moral exercise. This aligns with UNESCO's (2021) emphasis on values-driven digital transformation, ensuring that technology enhances not erodes ethical and spiritual development. Azhar and Mahfud (2023) further affirm that

embedding moderation into digital literacy enables students to become ethical digital citizens, capable of resisting algorithmic extremism and promoting intercultural understanding. At MAN 2 Aceh Tengah, *tawasuth* acts as the moral filter through which students learn to balance freedom of expression with empathy and respect—an essential quality for religious moderation in the information age.

4.2. 3 Institutional Culture and Collaborative Ethics

Beyond formal instruction, *tawasuth* permeates the institutional culture of MAN 2 Aceh Tengah. School leaders, teachers, and students jointly construct a moral ecosystem that reinforces moderation through daily routines and extracurricular programs. Activities such as *Moderation Week*, interfaith dialogue simulations, and digital ethics workshops strengthen communal awareness of balanced religious expression. This reflects Abdullah's (2021) model of *moderation as social habitus*, in which consistent moral practice within institutional settings fosters long-term value internalization. The collaboration between teachers, parents, and religious leaders ensures that moderation is not limited to classroom instruction but extends to the broader community of virtue (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2016). Such institutional synergy is vital for sustainability. When moral education aligns with administrative vision and community engagement, *tawasuth* becomes a lived value rather than a formal policy. The MAN 2 Aceh Tengah case thus illustrates the transformation of moderation from a curricular objective to a collective ethos a social fabric that binds knowledge, behavior, and spirituality.

4.2. 4 Challenges and Implications

Despite these achievements, the study identified several challenges. Teachers reported difficulties balancing digital engagement with moral discipline, as students are often influenced by the immediacy and anonymity of social media. Moreover, limited teacher training in technology-mediated pedagogy occasionally hinders the depth of digital ethics instruction. These findings echo Alam's (2022) observation that moral education in the digital context requires constant pedagogical adaptation and policy support. To address these limitations, the study suggests that religious institutions should invest in professional development focused on digital moderation pedagogy. This includes equipping teachers with competencies in media literacy, online dialogue facilitation, and ethical content creation. Theoretically, the findings reinforce that *tawasuth* functions not only as a moral principle but also as a dynamic epistemology a framework for interpreting, evaluating, and applying knowledge within complex digital environments. Practically, it shows that Islamic Religious Education can play a transformative role in producing morally resilient, technologically literate, and socially harmonious citizens. As the digital world continues to redefine human interaction, Islamic education anchored in *tawasuth* ensures that faith and reason, spirituality and technology, remain in balance preserving humanity's ethical compass in an age of disruption.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a vital and transformative role in strengthening the value of *tawasuth* (moderation) amid the moral and ideological challenges of the Digital Era. The findings from MAN 2 Aceh Tengah demonstrate that when Islamic education integrates moderation into pedagogy, digital literacy, and institutional culture, it produces students who are spiritually grounded, ethically conscious, and technologically competent. At the pedagogical level, teachers internalize *tawasuth* not as a static concept but as a dynamic moral framework guiding classroom interaction, reflection, and critical dialogue. Lessons that combine scriptural understanding with contextual reasoning help students develop balanced worldviews and respectful engagement across differences.

At the digital level, *tawasuth* functions as a foundation for ethical digital behavior. By promoting *adab al-raqamiyyah* (digital manners) and critical media literacy, MAN 2 Aceh Tengah demonstrates how Islamic education can humanize technology turning digital spaces into platforms for moral expression and constructive dialogue rather than intolerance. Institutionally, the school's culture of collaboration among teachers, students, and community stakeholders reinforces moderation as a shared value system, not merely a curriculum objective. This synergy between educational policy, religious ethics, and digital pedagogy reflects Indonesia's broader vision of *wasatiyyah* Islam balanced, inclusive, and forward-looking. Recommendations emerging from this study include: 1) Expanding teacher professional development in digital ethics and moderation pedagogy, 2) Integrating *tawasuth* explicitly into national Islamic education curricula and digital literacy frameworks, 3) Promoting community partnerships between schools, parents, and religious leaders to strengthen moral resilience among youth. Ultimately, this study affirms that Islamic Religious Education, when guided by *tawasuth*, can serve as a moral compass in the digital age ensuring that technological progress remains aligned with the values of justice, compassion, and human dignity.

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